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is a common amusement to recline upon the carpet and kick your son about the room. This exercise however, being somewhat violent, may perhaps have passed away; for in the present day—although “Drawing-room skates” are exceedingly popular—many much more quiet entertainments are, we perceive, provided; amongst which “Drawing-room fireworks,” in spite of the Insurance offices, are in much demand. Then we have comic vocal music written, as we presume, for the family circle, for we are told that Leslie’s “great” song, “The Four Jolly Smiths,” is the “popular drawing-room song of the day,” a fact of which, until the appearance of this advertisement, we were certainly unaware; and as a further proof of the importance of this composition, we are informed that it is “also arranged for brass band of 15 instruments, with duplicate first cornet part,” so that it will assuredly make some noise in the world. Our taste in music will no doubt be thought, by the admirers of these works, a trifle too classical; and we might hesitate if we were to speak on the subject solely from our own feelings; but we must say that whenever we have heard these comic effusions either in or out of a drawing-room they have scarcely provoked a single smile; and although their extreme innocence may perhaps to a certain extent compensate for their extreme stupidity, it may become a question whether, like the unmeaning prattle of common-place children, such nonsense is not rather tolerated than enjoyed. In our researches into this matter, we find also that strictly evangelical families are now accommodated with precisely the article they require. We think it was Albert Smith who defined the height of misery to be “spending a wet Sunday with a serious family at Clapham;” and he also declares that, when he has been doomed to this penance, he has constantly felt a desire to kick over the tray upon which the coffee was being handed round by the servant; or, by a carefully contrived accident, to upset something which might for a brief period divert the family from that serious propriety which appeared to possess the entire household. That some such feeling as this must have communicated itself to the heads of these families seems apparent from the publication of the “Ave Maria” Quadrilles, the “Visions of Paradise” Mazurka, and the “Child of Heaven” Valse; works which may, we should think, be safely used by all who do not object to a little serious dancing in the evening. Such compositions should be sold with a decently conducted gravity; and may be pressed upon customers on the same principle with which the proprietor of a toy-shop recommended a “Noah’s Ark” as an excellent plaything for Sunday, because it was “alluded to in the Scriptures.”

It may be said that such advertisements as we have mentioned appeal only to those who, if such compositions were not published, would never think of purchasing music at all. To this we reply that, for the sake of the art, if not for that of the proprietors of these works, it would be very much better if such taste were not appealed to. [The “fast” spirit of the present day is rapidly creeping into our drawing-rooms; and we have young ladies who derive no enjoyment from the purest vocal compositions of the great masters, as conversant with “Jolly” somebody’s “great” songs as if they were in the habit of nightly frequenting the Music-halls: and certainly the rapidly increasing coloured

music-titles, of a questionable character, which stare them out of countenance in their daily walks, afford ample proof that the supply fully equals, if it do not exceed, the demand. It is true that there is just now a great fashion to admire what is presumed to be “classical;” but where this admiration in public sinks into utter apathy in private, such hypocritical enthusiasm is worse than candid indifference. The sickly sentimental ballads called into being and tenderly fostered by the “Royalty” system, may suffice for those who have never been trained to feel the eloquence of music in its highest aspect, whilst to others who desire something “more lively” the “great” songs of the “jolly” singers we have spoken of may be thoroughly acceptable. But all who desire the healthy progress of art should enter a protest against a system so utterly debasing to the youthful mind of a nation, whose boast it is to spread a love for what is good and great amongst its people. Ballads really excellent of their kind may be not only tolerated but enjoyed, even by those who can admire better things; but the maudlin sentiment of many of these productions is positively insufferable. Again, there may be songs (and indeed we have heard many) where a genial and ready flow of wit runs pleasantly through the verses; but what gratification to any listener can there be in drawling through many of the so-called comic songs which are now pronounced an “immense success?” We will place on record the titles of three of these—“Making Apple Dumplings,” “The Man wot played the Cornet,” and “Borachio, with the Roley Poley Eye,”—and ask any dispassionate judge to read through the words and try if they will even raise a laugh. For ourselves, as we have already said, whenever they have been sung in our presence, the inanity of the words appeared to be only equalled by the melancholy “jollity” of the singer; and we have no hesitation in affirming that if such compositions were banished not only from our drawing-rooms, but from our Music-halls, the atmosphere of both would become benefited by the change; and vocalists and poets (if we may so pervert the words) might probably consult their own interest by turning their attention to better things.

MONDAY POPULAR CONCERTS.

THE appearance of Madame Schumann at these Concerts, on the 4th ult., was an event so interesting to all who can appreciate the highest class of pianoforte playing, that there can be little wonder at the number of artists assembled on the occasion, or at the excitement caused even amongst the constant frequenters of these entertainments, by the novel sensation of listening to an executant whose reading was not as familiar to them as that of the clergyman whom they “sat under” on the preceding day. In truth, there can be little doubt that fresh interest is created in an audience by allowing the works of the great composers to be interpreted by various artists. There is always a difference in the reading of two pianists of an equal amount of intellectual power; and judgment in music, as in all other arts, is strengthened by comparison. That Madame Schumann is foremost amongst the most intelligent living pianists has been long conceded by all whose opinion is worth recording. For many years she has held the highest rank in Germany; and that this position has not been derived from her alliance with the composer, Robert Schumann, is proved by the fact that, as Madlle. Clara Wieck, she was universally recognised as one of the greatest artists of her day. Perhaps no one of the pianoforte sonatas of Beethoven could have been so admirably calculated to display Madame Schumann’s varied powers of colouring on the instrument as the one she selected on the occasion of her first appearance this season. The Sonata in D minor, No. 2, Op. 29, is certainly one requiring the most finished executive powers; but it also demands an intellectual appreciation of its meaning, and a dramatic faculty too rarely allied with mere facility of execution. The alternation of *Adagio* and *Allegro* in the first movement, with the occasional snatches of *recitativo*, can be readily played precisely as Beethoven has written them; but the power of sympathizing with the composer so as to re-produce his varied phases of thought as he spoke and felt in the language he had

chosen, belongs only to that order of genius of which Mendelssohn was the brightest example, and to which Madame Schumann, although in a lesser degree, may fairly lay claim. The beautiful *Adagio*, in B flat, was given with a tenderness of feeling contrasting most powerfully with the restless impetuosity of the last movement; which, whether suggested or not by the commonplace circumstance of a horseman galloping past the window of the composer (as related by Schindler), is certainly one of the very best of Beethoven's rapid *Andas*. The clearness of Madame Schumann's playing was here wonderfully apparent, the design of the composer never for one moment being lost in the whirlwind of passages requiring the utmost digital dexterity; and the spontaneous and prolonged applause which burst forth from the audience at the conclusion of the Sonata appeared bestowed not only as a tribute to the marvellous powers of the executant, but as a thank-offering, for aiding her hearers in the endeavour to comprehend one of the most poetical and dramatic works of Beethoven. The two Romances of Schumann are exceedingly graceful specimens of his smaller works. They were originally written for oboe, violin or clarinet; and performed as they were at this concert, for violin and pianoforte, by Herr Joachim and Madame Schumann, could scarcely be heard to greater advantage. They form two of a set of three; and of those selected on this occasion we infinitely prefer the one in A major—that in A minor being somewhat too broken and indistinct in design for a work of this trifling nature. They are, however, essentially "Schumannite" in character; and overflowing with those plaintively melodious phrases for which this composer is so remarkable. The last piece in the programme was Beethoven's Trio in E flat, which played to perfection as it was by Madame Schumann, Herr Joachim, and Signor Piatti, was so attractive as to keep the majority of the audience in their seats to the very last note; and the applause with which Madame Schumann was greeted on her retirement from the orchestra must have convinced her how thoroughly those artistic qualities, which have earned for her so high a name in her native land, are fully appreciated by those whose attendance at these concerts—unquestionably the most intellectual in London—has proved that their opinion is entitled to respect.

We have left ourselves but small space to speak of the performance of Spohr's Double Quartet in E minor—one of the most exquisite of the compositions of this class the composer has bequeathed to us—but when we say that it was played by MM. Joachim, Ries, H. Blagrove, Piatti, Pollitzer, Wiener, Zerbini, and Paque, there can be little doubt that the execution of the work was little short of positive perfection. A word of praise too must be awarded to Miss Edith Wynne, who sang Sullivan's "Orpheus with his lute," and Schubert's "Young Nun" so exceedingly well as to receive an *encore* in both; an honour, however, which she only availed herself of in Sullivan's song. In each of these compositions she was accompanied by Mr. Benedict, with the refinement of style to which he has now so thoroughly accustomed the audience at these concerts.

MR. HENRY LESLIE'S CHOIR.

THE first Subscription Concert for the present season took place on the 31st January, when a programme containing many new compositions, as well as several well known, was provided. Most, if not all, of these works were given with that minute attention to light and shade for which this Choir is so eminently distinguished; and which, in spite of an article in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, is so important a feature in the performance of choral music. Mr. Leslie has done much—indeed more than any man in England—towards introducing a better system of training choirs than has hitherto been adopted in this country; and if the writer of the article we have mentioned is of opinion that no variation should be made in the tone with which vocal part-music is sung, unless such variation be warranted by a corresponding alteration in the words, this opinion should rather be given forth in an essay upon the subject than made to form the basis of a charge against Mr. Leslie as a conductor. There can be no question that were the words of an ordinary part-song or madrigal to be read through, no two persons would agree as to where the alterations of tone should occur, or indeed even what portions should be sung *piano*, and what portions *forte*. If no iron rule, therefore, can be established as to where these effects are to take place, the reading of a conductor must be criticised, not according to his due observance of a law which can be decided by simply glancing at the words, but according to his power to give an intellectual interpretation of the entire design of the composition. Mr. Leslie, as an accomplished musician, has a right to take his own view of a work which he has to conduct (and a critic has of course a perfect right to quarrel with it); but if an abstract charge of continually altering the tone is brought against him as a violation of the true principles of art, such an accusation should be supported by the example bequeathed to us by those who have never been betrayed into this error. Strangely enough, too, we may remark that in the notice of the Concert in which these observations occur, Pinsuti's part-song, "The sea hath its pearls," is pointed out as the best of a number of modern compositions, although it unquestionably contains more sudden examples of the nature complained of than any other work in the evening's programme.

Amongst the part-music given for the first time at this concert we must especially mention a well written Madrigal, "My love is fair," by Mr. Henry Leslie—one of the best indeed (in spite of a few Handelian reminiscences) that we have yet heard of this composer, a graceful part-song, "Come live with me," by Professor Sterndale Bennett, a characteristic Duet, for female voices, "The Fan," also by the concert-giver (excellently sung by Madame Lemmens-

Sherrington and Madame Sainton-Dolby) and an elegant and musicianlike part-song, by Mr. Joseph Barnby, called "A Wife's song," all of which were most enthusiastically *encored*. Several of the genuine old Madrigals were also given, Morley's, "My bonny lass," with its quaint harmonies, eliciting quite a hurricane of applause, and a demand for its repetition not to be resisted. In addition to some solo vocal music, contributed by Madame Lemmens-Sherrington and Madame Sainton-Dolby, a Duet for two pianofortes, by Osborne, on themes from *Les Huguenots*, was very neatly performed by Miss Austine and Miss Julia Bennett.

On the 13th ult. a concert not included in the subscription was given, the principal feature of which was the performance of Mendelssohn's music to *Antigone*. For this occasion the choir was considerably strengthened, and a complete orchestra was engaged. The alternate pathos and vigour contained in these choruses to Sophocles' tragedy are in wonderful keeping with its mournful subject; and if the dramatic interest is not as great as in *Attila*, which Mendelssohn has also so powerfully illustrated, there can be no question that in some parts, (especially in the *Hymn to Bacchus*,) the music is even of greater sublimity whilst the simple grandeur of the classic poetry is admirably reflected by the composer. The execution of this work was on the whole exceedingly good; and every credit is due to Mr. Leslie for the zeal he has shown in placing this noble composition before the public in a manner commensurate with its merits. The *solis* parts, making allowance for their extreme difficulty, were carefully sung by Messrs. Lyall, A. Marshall, Chaplin Henry, and Smythson. The length of the performance of course to a certain extent militated against the general effect upon the audience; and we should think it advisable on a future representation of the work to curtail some of the verses which, we should mention were on this occasion admirably recited by Miss Kate Saville. The evening was entirely devoted to Mendelssohn, the "Italian Symphony," (exceedingly well played by a small but efficient orchestra), commencing the concert, a most masterly performance of the violin concerto, by Herr Joachim, following *Antigone*, and the Overture to *Ruy Blas* being selected to play the people out, a privilege of which we must say the majority of the audience unhesitatingly availed themselves. The room was very full.

GENOA.

IT is with pleasure that we announce the complete success which has crowned Signor Lavagnino's experiment of giving a series of Classical Concerts here. At the time we write, four have already taken place; affording opportunity for introducing to a Genoese audience quartets by Mozart, Beethoven, and Mendelssohn, trios by Hummel and Mendelssohn, and a concerto by De Beriot; the first violin part in each being alternately executed by Signor Lavagnino and Signor Macera, the viola by Signor Marengo, and the violoncello by Signor Ratto.

One of the chief graces that distinguish these concerts is, that, in order to promote the laudable desire shown by Maestro Lavagnino to establish a taste for sterling music, several distinguished amateurs have given their services in combination with those of the professional executants engaged for the occasion; so that the pianoforte part in Mendelssohn's Trio, Hummel's Trio, Mozart's Quartett, and De Beriot's Concerto, was performed by Miss Mercier, a lady whose playing is of rare excellence, while Contessa Amelia Branca-leone sang the grand air from Meyerbeer's *Profeta*, and several other vocal amateurs took part in the performance of Mozart's 12th *Mass*, which formed the third concert of the series. This last-named musical treat gave such universal satisfaction, that Professor Lavagnino has been prevailed upon to promise a repetition of the *Mass* performance in a still larger space; for though the picture gallery at Villa Novello is of considerable dimension, it was not found large enough to contain the numerous audience that assembled to hear Mozart's No. 12, a portion of whom had to overflow into adjoining rooms. Cherubini's lovely "Ave Maria," with clarinet obbligato, was the offertory-piece selected for the occasion of the *Mass* performance; and Miss Sabilla Novello's purity of voice with devotional expression were admirably seconded by the pure tone and as pure execution of Signor Celsetti's clarinet.

Great brilliancy was imparted to the second concert of the series by the appearance of Signora Paulina Vaneri, the *prima donna* of *Africana* celebrity at the Carlo Felice Theatre, who, by her own kind wish and by the obliging permission of the Opera directorship, sang Mozart's aria, "Quando miro quel bel ciglio," and Gounod's serenade, "Quand tu dors," the latter being exquisitely accompanied on the pianoforte and violin (obbligato) by Miss Mercier and Signor Lavagnino.

Opportunity was given to the bringing forward of promising fresh talent, by the performance at the fourth concert of "Three Melodies" for pianoforte and violin, the composition of a young Neapolitan named Benedetto Maglione, who played the pianoforte himself, and was accompanied by Signor Macera on the violin, with great delicacy, finish, and spirit. The youthful *debutante*, Miss Franches, also sang on two of the afternoons; first, Weber's beautiful moonlight scena from the *Freyschutz*, and, the second time, Mozart's "Batti, batti," from *Don Giovanni*.

WE have received a communication from Mr. J. Martin respecting a musical notation which he has invented for the express use of the blind. He has not furnished us with the details of his system; but we extract from his letter some information as to the manner in which the notes are to be expressed. "Having dispensed with the use of the staves," he says, "and substituted the letters bearing the names of the lines and spaces with sufficient other characters to express all that may be required, the music